

SENATE, No. 690

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 212th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2006 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator LORETTA WEINBERG

District 37 (Bergen)

Senator ELLEN KARCHER

District 12 (Mercer and Monmouth)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Asperger's Syndrome Pilot Initiative.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/27/2007)

1 **AN ACT** establishing the Asperger's Syndrome Pilot Initiative and
2 supplementing Title 30 of the Revised Statutes.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. Asperger's Syndrome is a Pervasive Developmental Disorder
9 often characterized by autistic-like behaviors and marked by
10 deficiencies in social and communication skills;

11 b. Children with Asperger's Syndrome tend to be self-absorbed,
12 have difficulty making friends, are often preoccupied with their
13 own interests and easily become the victims of teasing or bullying;

14 c. The best studies conducted to date indicate that Asperger's
15 Syndrome is five to six times more common than classic autism;

16 d. Those with the disorder are often misdiagnosed with other
17 neurological disorders such as Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity
18 Disorders or Obsessive Compulsive Disorder;

19 e. Although those with Asperger's Syndrome have a better
20 prognosis than those with other Pervasive Developmental
21 Disorders, people with Asperger's Syndrome often continue to
22 demonstrate difficulties in social interactions well into their adult
23 lives and face an increased risk of developing psychosis, depression
24 and anxiety;

25 f. Persons with Asperger's Syndrome who are diagnosed and
26 treated early have an increased chance of living independently and
27 leading healthy, productive lives;

28 g. Because individuals evidencing this syndrome may have
29 normal to superior intelligence, and do not always evidence
30 significant functional impairments across a range of life skills, they
31 may not be eligible for services from the Division of Developmental
32 Disabilities in the Department of Human Services;

33 h. The range of support needs for persons with Asperger's
34 Syndrome typically includes: social skills training; social supports,
35 including supported employment; housing supports; and psychiatric
36 services for the treatment of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and
37 other neurological disorders; and

38 i. The public policy of this State should seek to provide a
39 vehicle to address the needs of those who suffer from Asperger's
40 Syndrome through the establishment of a demonstration program
41 that provides vocational, educational and social training services to
42 individuals with this disorder.

43

44 2. The Commissioner of Human Services shall establish the
45 Asperger's Syndrome Pilot Initiative in the Department of Human
46 Services.

47 a. The purpose of the initiative shall be to provide vocational,
48 educational and social training services to persons with Asperger's

1 Syndrome, through community-based service sites, which offer
2 these individuals appropriate support, guidance and education to
3 enable them to: further their education, achieve gainful
4 employment, develop meaningful friendships, and become broadly
5 competent adults who are able to lead fulfilling lives.

6 b. The commissioner shall contract with one or more entities to
7 make services available Statewide under the initiative within the
8 limits of resources available for the purposes of the initiative.

9 c. The initiative shall provide services, through an
10 individualized approach to instruction and support for persons with
11 Asperger's Syndrome, which address a comprehensive range of
12 support needs for these individuals, including, at a minimum:
13 social skills training; social supports, including supported
14 employment; housing supports; and psychiatric services for the
15 treatment of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and other neurological
16 disorders.

17 d. The commissioner shall report to the Governor and the
18 Legislature on the initiative no later than two years after the date
19 that it commences operations, and shall include in that report a
20 detailed summary of its activities, an assessment of its cost-
21 effectiveness, and any recommendations that the commissioner
22 desires to make for the extension, expansion, modification or
23 termination of the initiative.

24
25 3. The Commissioner of Human Services, pursuant to the
26 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
27 seq.), shall adopt rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of
28 this act.

29
30 4. This act shall take effect on the 180th day after enactment,
31 except that the Commissioner of Human Services may take such
32 anticipatory administrative action in advance as shall be necessary
33 for the implementation of the act.

34 35 36 STATEMENT

37
38 This bill establishes the Asperger's Syndrome Pilot Initiative in
39 the Department of Human Services.

40 Specifically, the bill provides as follows:

- 41 • The purpose of the initiative is to provide vocational,
42 educational and social training services to persons with
43 Asperger's Syndrome, through community-based service
44 sites, which offer these individuals appropriate support,
45 guidance and education to enable them to: further their
46 education, achieve gainful employment, develop meaningful
47 friendships, and become broadly competent adults who are
48 able to lead fulfilling lives.

- 1 • The Commissioner of Human Services is to contract with
2 one or more entities to make services available Statewide
3 under the initiative within the limits of resources available
4 for the purposes of the initiative.
- 5 • The initiative is to provide services, through an
6 individualized approach to instruction and support for
7 persons with Asperger's Syndrome, which address a
8 comprehensive range of support needs for these individuals,
9 including, at a minimum: social skills training; social
10 supports, including supported employment; housing
11 supports; and psychiatric services for the treatment of
12 Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and other neurological
13 disorders.
- 14 • The Commissioner of Human Services is to report to the
15 Governor and the Legislature on the pilot initiative no later
16 than two years after the date that it commences operations,
17 and to include in that report a detailed summary of its
18 activities, an assessment of its cost-effectiveness, and any
19 recommendations that the commissioner desires to make for
20 the extension, expansion, modification or termination of the
21 pilot initiative.
- 22 • The bill takes effect on the 180th day after enactment, but
23 authorizes the Commissioner of Human Services to take
24 anticipatory administrative action in advance as necessary
25 for its implementation.